

Jesus Christ Controls History: Conclusion: Mayor of Ephesus Uses Laws of Divine Establishment, Acts 19:35-41; Kingdom's Divined Fall, Mt 12:25

VIII. Conclusion.

1. This brief overview of the principle that Jesus Christ controls history helps us analyze and discern our current Zeitgeist.
2. But whatever the present situation, it can be turned around by the believer and when enough positive volition is evident, the Lord controls history on behalf of it.
3. Jesus Christ controlled history in first-century Ephesus by means of the laws of divine establishment.
4. The mayor's presence at the theater and his ability to communicate legal principles to the potentially riotous throng is what restored order.
5. But how is it that the Lord can make unbelievers behave? Primarily through fear. Rome represented authority and Rome insisted that order be maintained in the provinces.
6. The mayor used these facts to disburse the crowd. Here was his approach:
 - 1) He appealed to the religious beliefs of the crowd: "Who is it that does not know that the city of the Ephesians is the keeper of the temple of the Great Artemis?" (Acts 19:35).
 - 2) He supported their belief that Artemis was the supreme goddess and this fact was indisputable (Acts 19:36).
 - 3) He then indicated that the men they had brought into the theater were neither robbers nor blasphemers yet identified himself with the Artemis worshippers by the use of the pronoun our: "our goddess" (Acts 19:37).
 - 4) The mayor then turns to a brief lecture on the laws of divine establishment as exercised by the Roman Empire. He advises Demetrius and his followers that if they have a legitimate complaint, the courts are in session and proconsuls are available and they may bring charges before them (Acts 19:38).
 - 5) If, however, their complaint is not covered by existing law, then they may appear before the town assembly in one of its three monthly meetings and express their grievances before that council.
 - 6) The key statement by the mayor is the one that wins the hour. He proclaims that the entire city is in danger of being accused of a riot without cause and thus they will be unable to account for themselves (Acts 19:40).

- 7) The impact of this statement sends fear up the spines of the theater's entire gathering. What follows is an example of how Jesus Christ controls history through the function of the laws of divine establishment.
- 8) If Rome should get word of an unlawful assembly accompanied by a riot, false accusations brought against Roman citizens without due process of law, and news that one of them may have been harmed or even killed, then the free status of Ephesus would be in extreme danger and the arrival of the Roman army a certainty.
- 9) Order restored, the mayor dismisses the assembly (Acts 19:41).
7. The principles that we have studied regarding the Lord's control of history are applicable to every area of life: the world at large, individual nations, their cities and towns, their neighborhoods and their homes, and each individual in them.
8. These principles also apply the local churches where authority is divinely assigned to the pastor-teachers God appoints as shepherds over the various congregations that make up His flock.
9. When members of a congregation are not authority oriented they tend to unknowingly arrogate authority to themselves and make unilateral decisions that are not theirs to make.
10. Whether a mob in Ephesus or a clique in a congregation, when decisions are made outside the authority structure of any organization the result is disorder.
11. PRINCIPLE: "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and any city or house divided against itself will not stand" —Jesus Christ, Matthew 12:25.
12. QUESTION: "Is Christ divided?" No. 1 Corinthians 1:13.
13. No matter what the organization—a kingdom, a city, or a house—it cannot last if those within it are divided. With this in mind there are a few applications from the principle that Jesus Christ controls history that need to be stated.